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## THE END OF THE PHOENISSAE.

THE *Phoenissae* poses a number of problems no one of which can be disposed of finally apart from the remainder. There are, however, certain aspects of the conclusion (ll. 1584-1766) which it seems possible to treat in isolation, and this will be attempted in the present paper.

The difficulties which have been encountered in these scenes may be classified most conveniently by taking in turn the three characters Antigone, Creon, Oedipus.

Antigone is charged with leaving the body of Polynices behind her after undertaking to bury it. This charge dates back to the scholia and may have been the beginning of the whole cloud of suspicion which has gathered about the play.

Creon is charged with two statements not strictly in accordance with audience knowledge. Eteocles did *not* (as he now claims) promise a dowry for Antigone, nor did Tiresias explicitly advise the exile of Oedipus. Clumsiness of writing in the first statement and dubious idiom in the second have intensified suspicion. In his stichomythia with Antigone Creon's failure to insist on the execution of his orders for the removal of Antigone and the disposal of the bodies has been objected to as inconsequent and undramatic. His exit, unvoiced by himself or other character, is certainly abnormal.

With Oedipus the difficulties are even more formidable. His *ῥῆσις* (ll. 1595-1624) is dull; it contains nothing that the audience has not heard; there is no poetry in it; there is some dubious idiom. His stichomythia with Antigone is unobjectionable; but his share in the subsequent kommos (ll. 1710-57) has seemed to exhibit such inferiority of style, such obscurity and lack of coherence, as could be accounted for only on the theory that 'Euripides, like modern operatic composers, had

come at the close of his career to lay much greater stress on the musical accompaniment than on the words themselves.'<sup>1</sup> Finally his concluding trochaics (1757-63) are patched together from the concluding lines of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and earlier lines of other characters in the *Phoenissae*. They are addressed, moreover, to 'πάτρας κλεινοὶ πολῖται,' who are evidently not in fact upon the stage.

The weight of these objections coupled with the fact that no part of the finale is led up to in Jocasta's prologue has brought some editors to the view that the Euripidean play ended about l. 1580. Others have believed that an original finale has been superseded or materially adapted by interpolation. No editor defends the existing text in or nearly in its integrity. Pearson sums up a judicious and strongly conservative argument with the words: 'that the conclusion of the play in its present form came direct from the hand of Euripides it is no longer possible to believe.'

The present writer finds himself completely dissentient. He hopes to show that all these difficulties are susceptible of solution in the light of clearer understanding of the characters and the action.

The charge that Antigone leaves Polynices' body behind would be serious if it were true. For not only has the dramatic force of her scene with Creon turned largely upon her insistence that Polynices must be buried, but in the very act of departure she repeats (1745): *ὅν εἰ με καὶ θανεῖν χρεών, σκότια γὰρ καλύψω*. But is the charge true? If we may believe the text, it is not: for l. 1744 reads: *ὅς ἐκ δόμων νέκυσ ἄθαρτος οἴχεται*. If we interpret this literally we find that Antigone, so far from leaving the corpse behind, pursues it: 'pursues' because in the next ten lines

<sup>1</sup> Pearson: from Masqueray.

she brushes aside a series of suggestions by her father which would delay their departure. It is not easy to suppose that the play concluded with exit of actors and chorus leaving three dead bodies on the stage. Their removal had been ordered by Creon (1672 ff.), and though the order was not immediately executed it may well have been fulfilled later. We ought surely to be reluctant to attach to *οἴχεται* the uncommon meaning of movement not yet begun. Nor can it easily carry here its figurative meaning of 'the departed.' The words *νέκυσ ἄθαρτος* and the succeeding promise of burial imply that the subject of *οἴχεται* is still in this world.

Passing to Creon let us take first the alleged inconsequences of his stichomythia with Antigone (1645-82). The difficulties here result partly from failure to visualize the action, partly from misapprehension of the balance and purport of the scene. It is essential to grasp that it is much more Antigone's scene than Creon's; Antigone is, in fact, the dominant stage figure from her entry with the bodies (1485) until the conclusion. Creon and even Oedipus are her foils. The dominant interest in her characterization is an evolution from the schoolgirl of the Teichoskopia into the heroine of the finale. The first hint that there is in her something more than schoolgirl charm is given in a brief scene with her mother where after shrinking at first she pulls herself together on the line (1279) *ἡγοῦ σὺ πρὸς μεταίχμι', οὐ μελλητέον*. The suggestion is developed on her return with the corpses in her lament (1485-1581). For it is here, and only here in this play, that Euripides releases the full sweep of emotional poetry. But poetry, however magnificent, cannot on the stage convince us by itself of character: we need action, and it is precisely her action in stichomythia with Creon, revealing at once emotional intensity and power to handle a crisis, which puts her firmly in charge of the remainder of the play.

When Creon's guards advance on his order to seize her she throws herself down on the body of Polynices (1661), this action being prepared by her line 1659. The men may well now recoil,

however tough they are, from tearing her off the corpse, and Creon may well relapse upon argument. Her physical contact with the dead is further exploited in ll. 1665, -67, -69 and -71; all of them lines which if merely spoken would be turgid but which action would charge with emotional force. Creon, on the other hand, is by no means to be thought of as a strong man: his earlier scenes with Eteocles and Tiresias have not so presented him; since then he has lost Menoeceus, and his references to that loss (1310-21) do not speak of strength. His obvious 'inadequacy' in this scene is, precisely, the scene's technical merit for bringing out the strength of Antigone. Notice the skill which delays until 1673 Antigone's announcement that she will not marry Haemon and until 1679 her announcement that she will go into exile with Oedipus. Creon introduces the marriage as a new line of argument at 1672. (Euripides marked the change of tack by writing *οὐκ* without connecting particle: editors have tended to obscure it by emending to *οὐδὲ* or *σὺν δέ!*) At the mention of the marriage Antigone flares superbly with a succession of explosive lines (1673, -75, -77) between which Creon can only stutter and wring his hands. At 1679 Antigone having so 'reduced' her adversary builds him a bridge by announcing her impending departure. We have, be it noted, no reason to suppose Creon enthusiastic for the marriage, and some to suspect the contrary. His scene with Eteocles has left him pledged to it; but, later, Tiresias has told him (886-8) that the real cure for Thebes is to get rid of the whole family of Oedipus: and he cites Tiresias in justification of his decision to expel Oedipus. Antigone's threat to murder Haemon, her oath sworn on a sword snatched probably as she springs up (1677) from Jocasta's body, may well 'rattle' a father who has just lost another son. And if Antigone goes she will provide the escort for blind Oedipus, the need of which Oedipus has proclaimed and which constitutes an obvious practical difficulty in enforcing his exile. There is a last touch—essentially Euripidean. To Creon's infuriating *γενναϊότης σοι, μωρία δ' ἐνεστί τις* (1680) Antigone re-

plies καὶ ξυμβαδύμαί γ' ὡς μάθης περαιτέρω. A perfectly natural remark for such a girlish heroine, so baited: emotion bordering upon hysteria. Yet as absurd as it is natural: there is no reason to suppose that her death will coincide in time with her father's. That this irrational hope of being done with her finally and for ever should be the last ounce which carries Creon into acquiescence is exquisite. And how beautifully is his second-rate character underlined by the pompous attempt (1682) to make the decision appear his own: ἴθ', οὐ φονεύσεις παῖδ' ἐμόν, λίπε χθόνα. He will either 'flounce out' or possibly make a 'delaying exit,' out-gazed by Antigone after an attempt to stare her down. In either case his exit is of weakness and leaves her firmly in command.

The insight into Creon's part which we have gained makes it easy to deal with the discrepancies in his earlier speech. Where a sympathetic character tells lies which tend to his own advantage we may suspect a tampering with the text: not so, when the character is unsympathetic and the lies are suited to the rôle. Both on the dowry and on the expulsion of Oedipus Creon presses the truth, but only a little: it is perversion rather than lying, though in each case materially to his own advantage. This conforms admirably with the cautious, egotistical, matter-of-fact temperament which he has throughout displayed. May we not further suspect that the clumsiness or peculiarity of idiom which has been noticed in these statements sprang from his speaking with hesitation, thinking out as he spoke how far he might prudently go? In such cases idiom and grace of diction are apt to weaken—if they do not absolutely go west!

Turning to the part of Oedipus we may begin by asking: why was it introduced at all? There were cogent reasons. Not only that the audience would expect to see him, but that his name and his story have pervaded the play. Behind the whole of its action has loomed the shadow of the curse upon Oedipus, and that shadow has been embodied, as it were, for the imagination of the audience in references

to the tragic, blind old man incarcerated by his sons in the palace. But imagination in such a case cannot do everything: sooner or later the outline which it has drawn must be filled in by bringing the man himself upon the stage. Moreover only so can the part of Antigone be rounded satisfactorily: the bright, eager child of the Teichoskopia must be brought into actual contact with her father: her exit must be an exit into exile and with him. We may deduce at once two conclusions in regard to the part: for first, if it is to do justice to the terror and pity which the name of Oedipus has throughout the play suggested, though the part will be short it must in no sense be meagre; it must have its share of kommos, of continuous speech, of stichomythia; in a word it must have quantitatively pretty much what the existing text allots. But secondly, Oedipus, when he comes upon the stage, must feed the part of Antigone without endangering her supremacy: he must not act his daughter off the stage.

We come next to a presumption (probably of critical importance) that Euripides was not writing here *in vacuo* but under the shadow of the Sophoclean Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex*. If his Oedipus resembled the Oedipus of Sophocles it might seem tamely borrowed, if it differed so as to challenge comparison it might take too much interest away from Antigone. Briefly, in order to avoid the tameness of a mere copy and the irritation or excitement of an amendment, the new Oedipus must differ from his predecessor in ways which leave him despite the difference a possible evolution of Oedipus Rex. In this connection it is important to notice that Oedipus in the *Phoenissae* is not angry. Among the many types of stage scene in the writing of which Euripides excelled is the scene where age is angry, and there are two considerations which might lead us to expect that the character would follow this line. For, first, the behaviour of Creon gives excellent opportunity for a scene of anger, and secondly, anger is one of the few ways in which a blind character can be successfully exploited: a blind man can in

the nature of the case *do* very little. Euripides' avoidance of anger in the part was probably due partly to desire to avoid obvious reminiscence of the anger of Oedipus with Creon in *O.R.*, partly to the fact that anger if sublime would endanger the supremacy of Antigone, if ineffectual would sink Oedipus too low.

The entry and first words of Oedipus (1539 ff.) deserve (as always with an important part) close attention. The word *βακτηρύμασι* suggests that Euripides used here the device of the tapping stick employed by Stevenson for the entry of Pew. There is, then, to be weird horror in the character. Lines 1541-5 remind the audience that his experience since he blinded himself has been such as to make it doubtful what kind of person he now is—shadow, or ghost, or dream: thus, at one stroke, the position as regards the Sophoclean Oedipus is cleared. For the rest of the *kommos* Oedipus is used mainly to 'feed' the part of Antigone, which works up to a superb poetical picture of Jocasta's death.

The next stage is the scene with Creon, where after hearing sentence of banishment he makes his one considerable speech of thirty lines detailing tersely but fully his past misfortunes and present straits. It is impossible to deny that this speech recapitulates matters already known to the audience and the other characters. Nor is its bleak dullness relieved by any touch of poetry. Finally, though its most serious linguistic lapse (1606) requires on any view emendation, there are several expressions which, indubitably harsh, do not suggest mistakes of the scribe. First, is such a speech needed? Second, is its form suitable under the circumstances? The need for it lies in the desirability of crystallizing in the minds of the audience their floating sense of what Oedipus' life has been and so giving the character sufficient *body* to make it felt not merely as queer and terrible but as integral to the play. Similarly there is need to prepare Antigone for her decision to go with Oedipus into exile. The point that it is all familiar to Creon is badly taken, for though the speech is addressed to

Creon, the person who listens to it is Antigone, her listening being all the more impressive by reason of Creon's indifference. It is no doubt true that the facts stated are known to Antigone also. She has, however, given no indication that she has so considered them or that they are so present to her mind as to balance and even outweigh those other horrors, her dead mother and brothers, which have been so far more powerfully presented alike to the audience and to herself. But is the speech (admitting its necessity) suitable in form? Is it the kind of speech which it is natural for Oedipus to make? Does it advance the character? We must remember that Oedipus has been long shut up and that this is the first occasion, for a considerable time, of his encountering his fellow-men. Is it unnatural that he should be thirsty to talk? Or that, if he talks, the only things which he *can* talk about are his troubles? If, finally, there is some clumsiness of idiom in such a speech, is *that* surprising? But, it will be asked, why so dull? Why not poetry? Or why not excitement? The answer is, precisely, that to make the speech overtly and adventitiously 'interesting' would avert the minds of the audience away from the speaker and to the things which he is saying or the person to whom they are addressed. It may be noted, however, that at its end this dead, dull harangue does establish one point of importance in the character. It is the speech of a man whose life and hopes are over, but its conclusion (1622-4) is so phrased as to convey a note of residual dignity, skilfully emphasized by the two curt lines of Creon's answer. This note of dignity is resumed when Oedipus after listening in his turn to Antigone's stichomythia with Creon comes into play again on Creon's exit for stichomythia with his daughter. He thanks her for her devotion but is willing to go alone, leaving her with his blessing at Thebes. Antigone persists in her determination to accompany her father, but for the moment no decision on the point is reached between the characters. Oedipus turns aside to his first piece of 'action,' the stroking of the dead faces of his wife



and sons—one of the greatest pieces of pure 'theatre' in the surviving plays. Great in itself and excellently placed, for the wave of emotion on which it must lift the audience is required to 'carry' his abrupt announcement that his destination is Colonus. It is a literary curiosity that among all the objections which have been urged against the scene the *suddenness* of this announcement has found no place.

We come now to the culminating problems, the forty-seven lines of kommos (1710-57) and the six trochaics (1758-63). Let us begin by acknowledging, nay insisting, that this scene on a first reading seems to deserve every word which has been said against it. Unless the action is visualized and the interplay of character comprehended, the passage is wholly unintelligible. It shall, however, be remarked that theories of interpolation may raise in such a case even more serious difficulties than they purport to solve. Genuine interpolation may be platitudinous, bathetic, or frankly absurd: it is not usually *obscure*. We may, of course, fall back upon a yet more desperate remedy than that of simple interpolation: we may suppose that a substitute version of the scene has got mixed with the original. In that case, however, we should expect spots of higher literary value to alternate with duller patches. There is nothing of this. The *writing* is markedly homogeneous: it is the *sense* which seems to be adrift. Having attempted to prepare our minds in this way for the possibility that the scene is authentic, let us attack the problems which it presents.

We begin by reminding ourselves of the presumption that during this scene the three bodies are removed. They are still present immediately before it, at least down to 1702. We presume them gone by 1744, when the earlier removal of Polynices is implied. Polynices being the dishonoured body, it would be seemly for the honoured bodies of Jocasta and Eteocles to be carried first into the palace before his is carried or dragged out. And if, as is probable, the bearers are the same in both cases, that natural order is theatrically necessary, for they cannot

return after removing Polynices. It is to be presumed then that Jocasta and Eteocles are removed earlier, and this raises rather acutely the problem of why no reference is made in the text to their removal. For though absence of such reference in a Greek play is not conclusive evidence against a stage movement, it would unquestionably be normal practice to give the movement words. We must therefore search the dialogue diligently for some indication of the movement which we infer and provide, if possible, some explanation for the absence of explicit reference.

Scrutiny of the dialogue reveals at once a contrast between the calmness of the opening speeches and the agitation which supervenes. Antigone's lines 1710-2 show calm in their 'literary' flavour, the likening of herself to a favouring wind, the beautiful echo of ὄρεγε χεῖρα in the Teichoskopia (103). Oedipus (1713-4) is similarly placid: πορεύομαι is perhaps the most sedate of all Greek verbs of motion. But now comes a change: Antigone (1716-7) by duplication of γενόμεθα, by catching up Oedipus' ἀθλία with ἀθλιοι and attaching γε thereto, by δῆτα and μάλιστα, is evidently both suddenly and strongly emotionalized; and this change is continued in her two next speeches, both of which are *staccato* and contain duplications. Oedipus catches fire less quickly: there is disturbance in his second speech (1718-9), yet only such as would be a natural reaction from Antigone's agitation. His request for his stick implies that she has taken it from him when they joined hands (1712) and has now broken from him without restoring it. This implication confirms our impression of her excitement. But the next speech of Oedipus (1723-5) with its duplicated double shout of *ὦ* and its duplication of *δεῦρά* shows that he too is now fully involved in *some* new turn of agitated emotion. It is submitted, first that this sudden shift of the characters from calm to emotion is indicative of a movement on the stage which the words do not report directly: and secondly that the coming out of bearers and the lifting of the bodies of Eteocles and Jocasta is precisely the kind of movement which

might occasion Antigone's lines 1716-7 with their suggestion of a sudden intensification of her misery. But why the growth in her excitement? Why the bitter cry from Oedipus (1723-4), who at first (1718-9) has registered only concern at the withdrawal of Antigone's hand? Above all, why the absence of direct verbal reference?

At 1724 the codices read *ἐλαύνων τὸν γέροντά μ' ἐκ πάτρας*. *ἐλαύνων*, it is universally agreed, cannot stand: it is syntactically impossible: *ἐκ πάτρας* on the other hand suggests that the speaker's mind is on his expulsion, and the accredited emendations *ἐλαύνειν* or *ἀλαίνειν* conform to this indication. A minimal change of text would be to substitute the genitive plural *ἐλαυνόντων* for *ἐλαύνων τὸν* and this would make admirable sense if, for any reason, Oedipus supposed that men were actually engaged in expelling him. And how easy for a *blind* man in his position to suppose just this, if bearers, coming out for the bodies and whose real purpose he cannot see, should force him back, and if at the same time his daughter has dropped his hand, is 'registering' emotion, and is calling him confusedly to 'come here and step there'! Incidentally how sound a piece of 'theatre,' how germane to that stroking of the dead faces which has immediately preceded it! It was, however, necessary in order to exploit in this way the blindness of Oedipus, to omit for the time being *verbal* reference to the removal of the bodies. The strength of the words *δεινὰ δέιν'* (1725) and of Antigone's succeeding lines is such that we may conjecture that Oedipus was not merely hustled back but fell upon the stage. This would give point to Antigone's *οὐχ ὁρᾷ Δίκᾳ κακοῦς οὐδ' ἀμείβεται βροτῶν ἀσυνεσίας* (1726-7), which must otherwise seem turgid. It would further explain her later use of the word *ὑβρισμάτων* (1743) in its application to Oedipus.

When Oedipus resumes (1728) he is a different man. It is notable that in his own account of his misfortunes (1595-1624) no mention is made of that pervading spectre of the play—the Sphinx. That omission must be signifi-

cant, and its significance is rubbed in by the allusion he makes to it in stichomythia (1689) and by the circumstances of that allusion. The circumstances are that he does not introduce it: it is extracted from him by Antigone's question (1688) *ὁ δ' Οἰδίπους ποῦ καὶ τὰ κλέιν' αἰνίγματα*; His own line, *ὄλωλ'· ἐν ἡμάρ μ' ὄλβισ' ἐν δ' ἀπώλεσεν*, shows clearly that in his sober opinion the Sphinx is an unhappy, a tragic, memory. But now (1728 ff.) he breaks suddenly into a confused expression, precisely, of *pride* in this memory. His speech is in the spirit of Lear's 'Ay, every inch a king!' And with the same emotional background—that he is at last a broken man, broken palpably in the view of the audience if they have seen him fall upon the stage and all the more pathetically in his own failure to realize that he *is* broken. The confusion of his mind in this speech (1728-31) is evident in the language, which is vague and uplifted, but the matter is clinched by his echoing Antigone's word *ἀσυνεσίας* with the word *ἀσύνητον* used in a different sense. He *hears* what is said to him and the words suggest trains of thought: but he no longer perfectly comprehends what he hears.

The remainder of the scene lies with Antigone, but when with her announcement of the exit of Polynices' body she tries to lead him off, we find an exquisite restatement of the fact that Oedipus is no longer perfectly *mentis compos*. His suggestions to his daughter that she should visit her friends and discharge religious duties have given particular offence to editors, yet if we accept the hypothesis that Oedipus has now begun to 'wander,' how admirable they become! It is natural that age should 'fuss' a little when setting out on a long journey.

We reach at last the trochaics (1758-63), condemned unanimously by the editors and indubitably upon the surface exceptionally odd. They are modelled on the concluding lines of *O.R.*, and contain echoes of earlier lines in the play by Polynices and Jocasta, and begin with the apostrophe *ὦ πάτρας κλεινοὶ πολῖται*, of which

words it has been reasonably said by Pearson: 'They are out of place: they cannot be addressed to the chorus and no one else appears to be present.' Yet for the Oedipus whom we seem to have discovered, 'wandering' now a little in his mind, but for that very reason feeling himself 'every inch a king', what more pathetically natural than that he should imagine himself to be addressing Thebes once more? What, again, more beautiful in the history of literature than that Euripides should here deliberately recall the mighty figure of Oedipus Rex? For by his superb handling he has at this final word brought his Oedipus back to the point at which Sophocles had left him. Οἰδίπους ὅδε, the man now before us, is indeed (in his own imagination) the man whom Sophocles had fashioned, different as he may have seemed to us while we watched the evolution of the part. Finally, what

more exquisite than that he should now echo to us (1761-3) words which have been spoken already in the play, spoken of themselves by the son whom his curse destroyed and by the wife whom he so tragically loved, but which are relevant to himself now?

We conclude that no one of the criticisms which have been directed against these concluding scenes can be sustained. In solving their difficulties we have been led repeatedly to the discovery of firm characterization and admirable sense of the stage. So far from its being impossible to believe 'that the conclusion of the play in its present form came direct from the hand of Euripides' it would be difficult to suggest more than one or two other writers in the whole of extant literature who would have been capable of constructing it.

H. O. MEREDITH.

Queen's University, Belfast.

#### PUNS IN HERODOTUS.

THE irresistible impression of gentle irony which Herodotus leaves on every reader arises from numerous qualities of style of which only some are capable of analysis. Of these qualities one is the use of puns; and I offer here, without aiming at exhaustiveness, a review of the different varieties of pun which season the pages of Herodotus.

By pun is intended the use of the same word or of the same series of sounds twice in the same context with different senses or implications. To our modern taste this figure is generally abhorrent, and in history we should not look for it from a writer with any pretensions to style. Yet Greek, which had delighted to pun on names ever since Homer said 'Ὀδυσσεύς . . . τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὠδύσαο, Ζεῦ; (a 60), can show undoubted examples in an author as grave as Thucydides himself: 7, 39, 2 Ἀρίστων ὁ Πυρρίχου Κορίνθιος, ἄριστος ὢν κυβερνήτης τῶν μετὰ Συρακοσίων; perhaps also 3, 70, 6 ἐπυνθάνοντο τὸν Πειθίαν μέλλειν τὸ πλῆθος ἀναπεύσειν; 1, 110, 2 τούτων διὰ μέγεθος τε τοῦ ἔλους οὐκ ἐδύναντο

ἐλεῖν, καὶ ἅμα μαχιμώτατοί εἰσι τῶν Αἰγυπτίων οἱ ἔλαιοι; and Herodotus makes a wide and varied use of puns.

Often the intention is unmistakably humorous. 1, 177 Κύρος πᾶν ἔθνος καταστρεφόμενος καὶ οὐδὲν παριείς. τὰ μὲν νυν αὐτῶν πλέω παρήσομεν—the historian and his readers will not be at such pains as the conqueror (καὶ οὐδὲν παριείς, a verb not elsewhere used by H. in such a context, has been deliberately adopted for the sake of the pun). 1, 193, 4 τοῖσι μὴ ἀπιγμένοιισι ἐς τὴν Βαβυλωνίην χώραν καὶ τὰ εἰρημένα . . . ἐς ἀπιστίην πολλήν ἀπικται—those who do not come to Babylon come to doubt the truth (the phrase is again a strange one, there being no nearer parallel than 2, 46, 4 τοῦτο ἐς ἐπίδεξιν ἀνθρώπων ἀπικετο). 3, 80, 1 καὶ ἂν τὸν ἄριστον ἀνδρῶν πάντων, στήναι ἐς αὐτὴν τὴν ἀρχήν, ἐκτὸς τῶν ἐωθότων νοημάτων στήσσει—the tyrant steps into power and out of his mind (στήναι ἐς ἀρχήν has no parallel in H., and I do not see one elsewhere). 3, 117, 4 οὐκ ἔχοντες τῷ ὕδατι χρᾶσθαι, συμφορῇ μεγάλη διαχρέωνται—trouble instead of

water (cf. 8, 20, 2 below). 3, 159, 2 ὥς ἔξουσι γυναικάς οἱ Βαβυλώνιοι, τάδε Δαρείος προῖδ' ὧν ἐποίησε· τὰς γὰρ ἐωυτῶν ἀπέπνιξαν οἱ Βαβυλώνιοι, τοῦ σίτου προορῶντες—the Babylonians were concerned about food, Darius about population. 4, 149, 2 τοῖσι ἐν τῇ φυλῇ ταύτῃ ἀνδράσι οὐ γὰρ ὑπέμειναν τὰ τέκνα, ἰδρύσαντο ἐκ θεοπροπίου Ἑρινῶν ἱρόν. καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ὑπέμεινε τῶντ' οὗτο—they kept their children and kept the custom (the emendations ὑπέμειναν and τῶντ' οὗτο <συνέβη> spoil the fun; the strangeness of ὑπομένειν in the latter sense is a guarantee that the pun was intended). 5, 85, 1-2 τὰ ἀγάλματα ταῦτα . . . ἐπειρῶντο ἐκ τῶν βάθρων ἐξανασπᾶν, ἵνα σφέα ἀνακομίσωνται. . . . κτείνειν ἀλλήλους ἅτε πολέμους, ἐς δ' ἐκ πάντων ἓνα λειφθέντα ἀνακομισθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐς Φάληρον—they could not bring themselves home, let alone the statues (ἀνακομίζομαι transitive here only in H.). 8, 20, 2, τούτοις οὐδὲν τοῖσι ἔπεσι χρῆσάμενοι . . . παρὴν σφί συμφορῇ χρᾶσθαι—if they would not have the oracle, they must have the disaster (χρῆσάμενοι is deliberately used instead of the more natural πειθόμενοι; see 3, 117, 4 above). 8, 65, 3-5 τὸν ναυτικὸν στρατὸν κινδυνεύσει βασιλεὺς ἀποβαλεῖν, prophesies Dicaeus; but Demaratus replies ἦν ἐς βασιλέα ἀνευχεθῇ τὰ ἔπεα ταῦτα, ἀποβαλέεις τὴν κεφαλὴν, a unique expression for being beheaded. 9, 73, 2 λέγουσι Δέκελον . . . ἐξηγησάμενόν σφί τὸ πᾶν πρήγμα κατηγήσασθαι ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀφίδνας—Decelus left nothing to chance. 9, 77, 2 τούτους ἐδίωκον μέχρι Θεσσαλίας· Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ οὐκ ἔων φεύγοντας διώκειν. οἱ δὲ ἀναχωρήσαντες ἐς τὴν ἐωυτῶν τοὺς ἡγεμόνας τῆς στρατιῆς ἐδίωξαν ἐκ τῆς γῆς—the Mantineans were determined to διώκειν someone (the addition of ἐκ τῆς γῆς shows that the repetition was conscious).

Like Thucydides *l.c.*, Herodotus has no compunction in punning on a proper name. 2, 118, 4 πιστεύσαντες τῷ λόγῳ τῷ πρώτῳ οἱ Ἕλληνες αὐτὸν Μενέλεων ἀποστέλλουσι παρὰ Πρωτέα—hardly unintentional, as τῷ προτέρῳ λόγῳ would be the natural expression, and so occurs in the preceding sentence. 3, 62, 2 Πρήξασπες, οὕτω μοι διέπρηξας

τό τοι προσέθηκα πρήγμα;—the pun is reinforced by the following alliteration. 7, 223, 1 ἐπέσταλτο ἐξ Ἐπιάλτεω οὕτω.

Sometimes Herodotus seems to have been attracted by a jingle without having any conscious reason for preferring it. When he says χώρον ἐξημερῶσαι ἐν ἡμέρῃ 1, 126, 1, the less natural use of ἐξημερῶσαι for 'level' or 'clear' is plainly due to the similar sound following in ἡμέρῃ; nor was ἀναιρέσθαι the natural word for 'adopt' in the sentence 2, 52, 3 ἐπεὶ ἐχρηστηριάζοντο . . . οἱ Πελασγοὶ εἰ ἀνέλωνται τὰ οὐνόματα . . . ἀνεῖλε τὸ μαντήμιον χρᾶσθαι, but due to ἀνεῖλε following. Even at considerable distance a striking word may produce a kind of echo. In 6, 125, 4 Alcmeon leaves the treasury of Croesus with every part of him bulging (ἐξωγκωτο). A chapter further on, in 126, 3, his son Megacles is one of those σφίσι τε αὐτοῖσι καὶ πτέρῃ ἐξωγκωμένοι (metaphorically) who come to woo Agarista. And these are the only places where Herodotus uses the word ἐξωγκῶ. Cf. 1, 136, 1 ἀνδραγαθὴ αὐτῇ ἀποδέδεκται, ὅς αὖ πολλοὺς ἀποδέξῃ παῖδας (ἀποδείκνυσθαι elsewhere of buildings, etc., but not children).

Fallacious anaphora is also a variety of pun. We have it very clearly in 6, 43, 3 τοῖσι μὴ ἀποδοκομένοις Ἕλληνων Περσῶν τοῖσι ἐπτά Ὀτάνεα γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι, which is made possible by the ambiguity in Ionic of ἀπεδεξάμην (from ἀποδέκεσθαι or ἀποδείκνυσθαι), an effect more feebly attempted by γνώμην ἀποδέκεσθαι παρὰ τοῦ βουλομένου ἀποδείκνυσθαι 4, 97, 2. Likewise 6, 81 τὴν στρατιὴν ἀπῆκε ἀπιέναι is probably due to the ambiguity of ἀπιέναι (from ἄπειμι or ἀπίμμι). Compare 9, 79, 2 ἐγὼ μῆτε Αἰγινήτῃσι ἄδοιμι μῆτε τοῖσι ταῦτα ἀρέσκειται, ἀποχρᾶ δέ μοι Σπαρτιήτῃσι ἀρεσκόμενον ὅσια μὲν ποίειν etc., the only place where H. uses ἀρέσκομαι with a non-personal subject. More than once such an anaphora smooths a transition. 3, 116, 3-117, 1 αἱ δὲ ὦν ἐσχατιαὶ οἰκασί, περικληῖονσαι τὴν ἄλλην χώραν καὶ ἐντὸς ἀπέργουσαι, τὰ κάλλιστα δοκέοντα ἡμῖν εἶναι καὶ σπαυώτατα ἔχειν αὐτά. ἔστι δὲ πεδῖον ἐν τῇ



Ἀσίη περικεκλημένον ὄρεϊ πάντοθεν, κτλ. 9, 83, 2-84, 1 πενταπήχεος ἀνδρός ὅστέα ἐφάνη. †ἐπεῖτε† δὲ Μαρδονίου δευτέρῃ ἡμέρῃ ὁ νεκρὸς ἠφάνιστο.

A slight irony is sometimes produced by the repetition of the same stem with different prefixes. This is well marked in the lapidary dictum on the would-be liberator of Samos, 3, 142, 1 δικαιοτάτῳ ἀνδρῶν βουλομένῳ γενέσθαι οὐκ ἐξεγένετο; less pronounced but still perceptible in 1, 61, 2 καταλλάσσετο τὴν ἐχθρὴν τοῖσι στασιώτῃσι, μαθὼν δὲ ὁ Πεισίστρατος τὰ ποιούμενα ἐπ' ἐωυτῷ ἀπαλλάσσετο ἐκ τῆς χώρας τὸ παράπαν. The same effect may be produced by active and middle of the same verb. 3, 138, 3 πειθόμενοι Δαρεῖ Κνίδιοι Ταραντίνους οὐκ ὦν ἐπειθον; and without irony 3, 31, 2 καλέσας τοὺς βασιλεῖς καλεομένους δικαστάς; 38, 4 καλέσας τοὺς καλεομένους Καλλατίας, which, though innocent enough, could easily

have been avoided by μεταπεμφόμενος or the like, had the jingle not been desired.

Finally, a series of repetitions of the same word in nearly or quite the same sense, for which no other cause can be detected than the mere and perhaps unconscious pleasure of the repetition. 1, 8, 4 σέο δέομαι μὴ δέεσθαι ἀνόμων; cf. 3, 44, 1 ἐδεήθη ὅπως ἂν καὶ παρ' ἐωυτὸν πέμψας ἐς Σάμον δέοιτο στρατοῦ. 1, 19, 1 ὥς ἂφθῃ τάχιστα τὸ λῆιον, ἀνέμῳ βιώμενον ἄψατο νηοῦ Ἀθηναίης ἐπικλησιν Ἀσσησίης, ἀφθεῖς δὲ ὁ νηὸς κατεκαύθη. 3, 84, 1 τοῦδε εἵνεκεν ἐβούλευσαν οἱ δίδοσθαι ταῦτα, ὅτι ἐβούλευσε πρῶτος τὸ πρήγμα. 8, 22, 1 νέας τὰς ἄριστα πλουσας ἐπιλεξάμενος ἐπορεύετο περὶ τὰ πότιμα ὕδατα ἐντάμνων γράμματα τὰ Ἴωνες ἐπελέξαντο; cf. 8, 49, 2-50, 1 ἐπιλέγοντες τὸν λόγον τόνδε . . . ταῦτα τῶν ἀπὸ Πελοποννήσου στρατηγῶν ἐπιλεγόμενων. J. ENOCH POWELL.

Trinity College, Cambridge.

#### RECENT WORK ON THE ROMAN THEATRE.

THE Romans were at all times fond of theatre-going; but the drama of the Empire was blighted by the shadow of the Caesars, the bookishness of the literary classes, and the degradation of popular taste. The wealthy freedman Trimalchio is typical of his age:— 'there were two things in the world', he said, 'which gave him absolute enjoyment—jugglers and horn-blowers; all other shows were absolute rubbish'. 'I did buy some comic actors', he added, 'but I preferred them to act farces'. The Empire has left us ten tragedies and the impressive remains of many theatres; but these theatres and these tragedies never had anything to do with each other. For living drama we must turn to the Republic. Scarcely anything remains of the republican theatres; but the twenty-six comedies of Plautus and Terence may tell us something about the theatrical conditions for which they were designed.

For many years these comedies have been studied from the literary point of view; and such study is indeed necessary, even if our attention is mainly directed to their theatrical rather than

to their literary value. Unfortunately they are not original works, but translations from the Greek. None of their Greek originals is preserved; no example of Greek New Comedy has come down to us entire; no native Latin comedy is extant. We have therefore no sure standard of comparison to help us in facing the preliminary problem, how far these translations are mere translation and how far they are something else. On this preliminary problem of disentangling the Greek from the Latin elements much ingenuity has been expended. We may believe, or assume, that the Greek originals were artistically perfect, and that therefore all imperfections can be ascribed to the Latin translator. We thus reconstruct the Greek originals as we ourselves might have written them, only to find that our brother students regard our reconstructions as greatly inferior to the Latin translations. We may collect instances of wordplay and topical allusions of purely Roman or Italian significance; here at any rate we have the work of the Latin translator. Professor Fraenkel has shown

the value of this method. But even his work is, I believe, to some extent founded on error.

In recent years American writers have paid special attention to problems of dramatic technique. Their conclusions are interesting, and seem valuable. But as I reflected on the results of both the literary and the technical methods, it seemed to me that much of the difficulty and uncertainty attending both methods could be traced to a single root problem. My reflections on this particular problem have led me to a conclusion which may be called surprising and even startling. The argument which I am going to put forward must have occurred to others before now, in whole or in part; it is in fact of a very simple character.

Not only did the Latin writers translate their plays from the Greek; they openly admitted, we may even say boasted of the fact. Their prologues occasionally give us the name of the Greek writer and the title of his play. 'This play is called in Greek the *Emporos* of Philemon; in Latin it is the *Mercator* of Titus Maccus'; or again: 'The name of this play in Greek is the *Onagos*; Demophilus wrote it, Maccus barbarized it'. What these statements seem to imply is that we have before us a straight translation. Nevertheless, if scholars are agreed in anything, it is in rejecting this implication. All the editors, all the commentators, all the historians tell us that the Latin writers were not content with translation, however free, but that they frequently employed what is known as *contamination*—that is, they inserted into their version of one Greek play scenes, characters, motives from another Greek play, and touched up the result so that their audience might not be aware of any incongruity. Briefly, then, *contamination* means the process of fusing two Greek originals together, or grafting a portion of one on the other, in order to produce one Latin play. The opposite process of analysing the result into its component elements has occupied German scholars for a century; while even those who, like the French scholar Michaut, are most sceptical about the results of such analysis, have

no doubts as to the reality of the problem. If we turn to the 1927 edition of Schanz-Hosius' *History of Roman Literature*, we are told that, for Plautus, contamination is directly attested. What is this direct evidence?

In the year 166, some eighteen years after the death of Plautus, the young poet Terence produced his first play, the *Andria*. It was based on a Greek original of the same name by Menander, but Terence had thought fit to take the opening scene and two characters from another play of Menander, the *Perinthia*. Somehow the enemies of Terence had got wind of this procedure, and had protested that plays should not be 'contaminated'. They may have been the first to use the word, at least in this sense. What was their objection to the practice? We may conjecture that in the announcements of performances stress was laid upon the names of the Greek authors; thus the advertisement of the *Andria* may have run as follows: 'On the eighth day before the Ides of April, at the Games of the Great Mother, there will be a performance in front of the temple of the goddess, on the Palatine, of a new play of Menander, the *Andria*, a witty and amusing comedy, done into Latin by Terence. Production by Atilius of Praeneste and Ambivius Turpio! Music specially composed by Flaccus, the slave of Claudius! Straight from the Greek! Never before seen in Rome!' We may be certain that the public would be more attracted by the famous name of Menander than by the hitherto unknown name of Terence. That Terence should have presumed to take liberties with the Greek text might therefore arouse resentment. Another point would be the importance attached to finding *new* Greek plays, that is, plays which had not previously been translated. There seems to have been a kind of unwritten law, or gentlemen's agreement, which protected the rights of the first translator. The plays of Plautus and his rivals survived in the form of acting editions which had been bought or inherited by actor-managers, who could use them for revival performances. These actor-managers wished to protect the value of their property, and would

be indignant if any contemporary dramatist were to produce a new version of one of the plays which Plautus had already translated. But the supply of previously untranslated Greek plays was not unlimited; and Terence, by adopting *contamination*, was using up the supply at twice the normal rate.

Terence was forced to write a prologue by way of reply to his detractors. He admitted the fact, but added 'These gentlemen, by their cleverness, merely show how stupid they are. When they accuse the author they are also accusing Naevius, Plautus and Ennius, whose example the author has followed, and whose negligence he would rather imitate than the dull diligence of his accusers. So let them take warning, and cease to make unpleasant accusations, or they will hear something unpleasant about themselves.'

This passage is the only express evidence in ancient literature for the use of contamination by Plautus.

In the manner of Demosthenes, 'I will not mention' that Terence came from Carthage, and that *Punica fides*, 'Carthaginian bad faith', was a byword in Rome. It is clear from his prologues that Terence had enemies at the 'Poets' Club', who were doing their best to drive him from his career as a dramatist. Thus they accused him of being helped in his work by Scipio and Laelius. To admit this charge would have injured his own reputation; to deny it indignantly might have offended his patrons. Terence neatly extricated himself from this dilemma by a reply which would evoke loud applause among the public, but which leaves us still in doubt whether he has denied the charge or proudly acknowledged that he was privileged to be the colleague of such noble men. More serious doubts as to his veracity are raised in regard to the *Eunuchus*. This comedy, based on the *Eunuchus* of Menander, was perhaps produced at a critical moment, when Terence's fortunes were clouded by the abject failure of the *Hecyra*; at any rate the *Eunuchus* seems to have been specially designed to win popular favour, and succeeded in so doing. But it almost came to grief at the preliminary performance, or dress rehearsal. One

of Terence's enemies had managed to secure admission, and while the play was being performed in the presence of the magistrates he suddenly sprang to his feet, and proclaimed that Terence was a thief; that he had stolen the characters of the parasite and the soldier from an old play of 'Naevius and Plautus', the *Colax*. Terence's reply is that he *had* taken these two characters from the *Colax* of Menander, but that he had been entirely unaware that the *Colax* had been previously translated into Latin. If this statement is to be regarded as true, it seems to show remarkable carelessness; if false, we may reflect that Terence's trick might well have escaped detection, as the public notices of the play would have given only Menander's *Eunuchus* as its original, and would have said nothing about the secondary source, Menander's *Colax*. But Terence goes on to say:—'If we are forbidden to use the same characters twice over, how can a dramatist be allowed to depict hurrying slaves, virtuous ladies, crafty courtesans, hungry parasites, swaggering captains, children palmed off on the wrong parents, old gentlemen tricked by their slaves, love, hate, suspicion? In short, there is nothing now left for us to say which has not been said already'. Here we have manifest sophistry; the accusation against Terence was not that he had introduced stock types, but that he had stolen particular scenes and characters.

To return to the 6th April, 166 B.C., and to the charge of 'contamination'; Terence, unable to deny the facts, is taking refuge in the assertion that he has simply followed established practice. We are not told whether this line of defence came as a surprise to his accusers or not; but if they were merely accusing Terence of reviving or continuing a practice of many years' standing, which had even been followed by Ennius, who had died only three years before this time, it is hard to see why Terence should have been so much alarmed by their accusation that he was forced, contrary to his expressed intention, to write a prologue in reply. He says that he had wished to avoid writing prologues altogether; instead, we

have him writing a prologue which is itself apparently an innovation in type, being a polemic instead of the usual statement of the dramatic situation.

Can we really believe Terence's assertion that previous writers had used 'contamination'? He was, as usual, in a difficult position. It was very important for him to silence criticism, or at any rate to persuade the public that the criticism was unfounded, until his first play should get a fair hearing. I believe I have shown that, if a direct lie offered an easy way of escape, Terence was the man to use it. But could a direct lie of such a nature escape detection? I believe that it could, and that Terence knew that his bluff could not be called.

Let us suppose that a modern playwright found himself in a similar situation. At the end of the first-night performance, in response to the shouts of 'Author!' he would appear, and after thanking his audience for the magnificent reception accorded to his play he would add: 'As for the charge which, I hear, has been levelled against me, to the effect that I have offended against such-and-such canons of dramatic composition—well, ladies and gentlemen, all I can say is that I am content to stray, if strayed I have, in the company of Shakespeare, Sheridan and Shaw!' No doubt each member of the audience, on returning home, could get down the works of these dramatists, and start looking through them—but to what purpose, if he had not quite understood the technical terms which the playwright had used, and if, moreover, what he was looking for did not exist? And how many of us would even make the attempt? In second-century Rome the difficulty of checking Terence's statement would have been much greater. There were no public libraries, and such private collections as that of the ex-king Perseus of Macedonia, which had been brought to Rome in the previous year, would scarcely have contained the dramatic works of Naevius, Plautus or Ennius. These works only survived as acting editions in the possession of actor-managers. Exhaustive comparison of these plays with their ostensible originals, in order to

test Terence's statement, was a task for which I imagine that the actor-managers possessed neither the time, nor the inclination, nor the ability; they may not even have possessed copies of the Greek originals, or a reading knowledge of the Greek language. What were they to gain by such research? If contamination was to be regarded as a fault, discovery of it in the plays which they possessed would have lessened the value of their own property. Terence was quite capable of giving chapter and verse for other statements on other occasions—as for example in the prologues of the *Eunuchus* and the *Adelphi*. In the present instance he is quite vague. Indeed, the whole of this passage is curiously and allusively worded. In Terence's only other reference to the charge of 'contamination', in the prologue to the *Heauton Timorumenos*, he is vaguer still; he says briefly that he is following 'good' example. Moreover, it seems that even by Terence's time the records of earlier Latin writers had grown confused. We possess twenty-one plays of Plautus, in whole or in part. Varro listed twenty-one plays as universally admitted to be Plautine, and these must be the twenty-one that have come down to us. But the two plays which Terence specifically assigns to Plautus, the *Colax* and the *Commorientes*, are not among our twenty-one. Such confusion would have made it still more difficult for any contemporary of Terence to check his statement.

Our modern playwright might receive authoritative refutation from the lips of Shaw; but Terence has been careful to mention only dramatists who were no longer living.

Whatever Terence's enemies might say or suspect—and we know that they did not cease to complain of his employment of contamination—they would find it difficult to convince the public that he was lying; while his friends Scipio and Laelius, even if they had an inkling of the truth, would keep their inkling to themselves.

Unless, therefore, other evidence can be brought to support Terence's statement, that statement must be regarded as unreliable. But no such supporting



evidence exists; no ancient historian, critic or grammarian makes any mention of contamination in connexion with Plautus or any other writer; Donatus, who gives us details of how Terence used the device, makes no mention of its employment by other dramatists. Nor is the statement in itself probable. It seems doubtful whether manuscripts of Greek plays were available in sufficient numbers in Plautus' times to make it possible for him to contaminate; it seems most unlikely that he would have taken the trouble to do so. Tradition depicts him as a hasty writer. Terence, in the very passage under discussion, refers to his 'negligence'; Horace accuses him of 'box-office mentality':

gestit enim nummum in loculos demittere . . .

'Contamination' demands considerable expenditure of skill and care, if the joinings are not to be too obvious. Therefore, if Plautus contaminated, we should expect the traces to be only too evident.

So far is this from being the case that, after a hundred years of vigorous argument, there is no general agreement as to where Plautus contaminated, and how. The weaknesses of the *Poenulus* have drawn the attention of scholars for more than fifty years. In 1883 Götz, of Jena, thought that he had solved many of the difficulties by the simple process of interchanging acts II and IV. But in 1912 Friedrich Leo declared his belief that the play was an example of the most thoroughgoing contamination. Eduard Fraenkel, in 1922, limited the contamination to a single scene; G. Michaut, in 1920, had rejected it altogether. In 1931 Günther Jachmann returned to the theory of far-reaching contamination. Let us look more closely at Leo's analysis. He thought that Plautus had fused his two models thus:—lines 1-158: model A; lines 159-189: model B; lines 190-202: Plautine insertion; lines 203-414: B; 415-416: Plautine insertion; 417-448: model B; 449-503: A; 504-816: B; 817-820: Plautine insertion . . . and so on. Is this a likely procedure? Would it not have been easier for Plautus to write a play for himself?

The *Casina*, as is well known, ends with scenes of the broadest type. Leo regarded act V as introduced from some Italian low farce or mime; Fraenkel also regards the end of the play as contaminated, but in quite another way, scenes being carefully inserted in acts IV and V from an Attic original; finally Jachmann regards the whole play as a faithful translation from Diphilus. The *Rudens* is usually thought to reproduce closely its Greek original; Jachmann thinks otherwise, and devotes a hundred pages to showing that Plautus has here displayed more independence than in any other play. Such ratiocination reminds us of the debates of Milton's fallen angels, who

reason'd high

Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,  
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

We turn our eyes westward, and all is light.

largior hic campos aether et lumine uestit  
purpureo.

A new significance is seen in the aphorism that 'our frontier is on the Rhine'. French scholars approach these problems in a different spirit. Logical by race, they realize that there are subjects to which strict logic can scarcely be applied. The plays of Plautus contain many inconsistencies in plot and character-drawing; but the attempt to determine the exact reason for any particular inconsistency must, they will admit, in most cases fail for lack of evidence. If the plot hangs together more or less, if the inconsistencies are not such as to spoil the pleasure of spectator or reader, if the characters are entertaining, the dialogue lively, they do not trouble themselves too much about the higher criticism. The main interest of French students has been in the human and artistic aspects of the subject. But the charm of their style and the lucidity of their argument must not blind us to their limitations; and great as has been their contribution to our knowledge of New Comedy and Latin drama, it seems small beside the vast if unsteady edifice which has been reared by German learning, thoroughness and

ingenuity, qualified though these virtues are by credulity, subjectivity and sentimentality. Confronted with the ultimate problems, the German is usually ready to supply an explanation of some sort—obscure, it may be, and question-begging; the Frenchman is luminously agnostic.

If the argument which I have put forward is sound, it becomes much easier to accept the conclusions of the American students to whom I have referred. The work of these students may be called technical. It deals with problems of staging and production, with the number of actors required for each play, the division of the rôles between the actors, the management of entrances and exits and so forth. No dramatist can ignore such problems, for on them depends the success of the performance. The tendency of recent research has been to show that the Latin plays do in fact bear evidence of careful construction. Nor is this surprising. For if we reject contamination in Plautus as a myth, it seems to follow that the framework of his plays is almost wholly Greek.

Readers of the *Rudens* have often felt surprised at the behaviour of those romantic lovers, Plesidippus and Palaestra. The play turns mainly on their separation and ultimate reunion. In only one scene do we see them together. In that scene the heroine is silent, but not, apparently, as the lovesick Dido was silent while she pointed out to Aeneas the half-built city of Carthage. Plesidippus addresses Palaestra but once, and even then in words which suggest the husband rather than the lover:—‘Stay where you are, my dear, until I come back’. This difficulty has been solved. Readers may remember a tale of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, ‘The Duel of Dr. Hirsch’, in which the two principals are prevented from meeting to the end of the story. ‘They will never meet’, said Father Brown. ‘If God Almighty held the truncheon of the lists, if St. Michael blew the trumpet for the swords to cross, even then, if one of them stood ready, the other would not come’. And so Plesidippus and Palaestra cannot meet, or if they meet cannot speak to each other, be-

cause both parts are taken by the same actor.

The Roman playwrights took over Greek plays which had been written for small troupes of actors, and motives of economy were as powerful in Rome as in Athens. The Roman actor was not necessarily the cheap slave of whom some editors speak. If we assume that extra performers could be used in mute parts, or occasionally to deliver a very short remark, much shorter than that of Pylades in the *Choephoroi*, the plays of Plautus could all be performed by a troupe of not more than five actors. That these actors were quick-change experts is clear, but they do not appear to have been treated any worse than Elizabethan actors, who were sometimes allowed an interval of only eight to ten verses in which to change. No Roman actor seems to have had so hard a task as that set by Aeschylus in the *Choephoroi*, where the servant is allowed only five lines in which to change—that is, if we believe the scholiast’s statement that the part of Pylades was taken by one of the regular actors.

Further discussion of technical details lies outside the scope of this paper. I have confined my remarks almost entirely to a single point, but that point is the centre of one of the fiercest contests in the world of scholarship. It requires no small hardihood to plunge into the midst of the Homeric struggle and endeavour to show that the Helen for whom the heroes have fought so long is but a phantom. Yet, slight as my argument is, I believe that I have set out the whole of the evidence; and if it should be found that what I say has been said already, I trust that the blame will be laid to my little reading rather than my great dishonesty. In all dramatic criticism we should, I think, distinguish carefully between those things of which the conscientious dramatist *will* take care and those other things of which the veriest showman *must* take care. Consistency of plot, unity of character, fitness of utterance—these points mattered greatly, no doubt, to Sophocles and perhaps to Shakespeare: to Plautus they mattered little; as for Diphilus and Philemon, what answer can we give? But to

make sure that the performance is smooth and slick, that the actors come pat on their cues, that the spectators are not left without amusement for eye or ear—such are the problems which the writer of successful comedy must solve. Plautus took many liberties with

his originals; but that by disorganizing their whole structure he should wilfully have created problems of staging and production for which he would himself have to find a fresh solution, I find hard to believe.

W. BEARE.

*University of Bristol.*

## REVIEW

### CHARACTER STUDIES FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

*Five Men.* Character Studies from the Roman Empire. By M. P. CHARLESWORTH. Pp. ix + 170. (Martin Classical Lectures, Vol. VI.) Cambridge, U.S.A.: Harvard University Press (London: Milford), 1936. Cloth, \$2 or 8s. 6d.

ONE might be pardoned for suspecting that the history of the Roman Empire, in revulsion from Tacitus and Suetonius, is in danger of losing itself in the problems of imperial organization and provincial history of which those authors have told us so little. Not that administrative history does not concern persons and personality—the study of prosopography yields priceless and exciting results. But all too often we have only names and deeds and careers: the men themselves elude us, even the most eminent among them, such as Trajan's friend and general C. Julius Quadratus Bassus, known only from a single inscription from Pergamum. But there is plenty of authentic information about people to be had, if you know where to look for it, as Mr. Charlesworth's book reminds us. And how better can the Empire be understood than when it is reflected in the character and life of different individuals? Mr. Charlesworth has chosen five men (four of them real, the fifth an imaginary and composite character) around whom to group with unobtrusive skill a pattern of facts, lessons and theories.

I. 'The Native Ruler'. This is Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great and himself King of Judaea for three years (A.D. 41-44). His career was variegated, his character versatile. From the early days and the expedients to which Agrippa was reduced in raising

money for his trip to Italy down to the last scene of all, the grandiose and impious pageant at Caesarea, the story is lively and well worth the telling. But this is not all. At the same time Mr. Charlesworth illustrates the difficulties that confront any kind of government in Palestine and shows how usefully a dependent prince could be employed by Rome to keep the peace and promote civilization, to curb the 'knife-men' and to exhort to better ways the people 'that live in caves like beasts' (*O.G.I.S.* 424—though this inscription probably refers rather to Agrippa II). Agrippa was a success, being personally acceptable to the Jews: Mariamne, his grandmother, belonged to the old royal line.

II. 'The Philosopher'. Posterity has sometimes found the Stoics rather tedious: they could certainly be tiresome to their contemporaries. Vespasian, a tolerant, humorous and sensible person, had to get rid of Helvidius Priscus. Musonius Rufus was less 'politically-minded'. But Tacitus takes malignant delight in describing how this worthy man forced himself upon a senatorial peace-mission, though only a Roman knight in standing, and displayed his 'intempestiva sapientia' in the midst of armed men—'id plerisque ludibrio, pluribus taedio'. Mr. Charlesworth is more sympathetic. Much of what Musonius preached, to be sure, is conventional doctrine 'based on the unfortunate Stoic assumption that enjoyment is in itself a bad thing' (p. 49). But Musonius on the Simple Life is persuasive, for he is not merely declamatory. Further, his defence of marriage for philosophers and education for women is humane as well as rational.

Musonius therefore 'deserves our kindly study . . . there is in his teachings a certain positive common-sense realistic quality which differentiates him from much of the thought of his time and which (it seems to me) won him the respect of the common-sense Vespasian. Much of his teaching is in strong and deliberate contrast to the anti-everything extravagances of the later Cynics, and reveals a frame of mind far more normal and healthy' (p. 37).

III. 'The Adventurer'. A very different person from Musonius was Flavius Josephus, that learned Jew. To many, Josephus is only a name, an authority for an important period of sacred and profane history—one tends to forget the part he played in certain of the transactions he narrates. Josephus may have gone into the desert and spent three years in the company of an ascete called Bannus: it did him no harm—he was the very reverse of an unworldly character. The young general in Galilee seems to have shown no little military and political skill. What saved his life time after time was guile and resource (he calls it 'God's providence' himself). Thus Josephus escaped from shipwreck 'outstripping the rest', and from the suicide-pact in the cave at Jotapata. He ingratiated himself with Vespasian, winning liberty from his prophecy of empire and rich rewards as a political propagandist—the *Jewish War* was written 'to tell the truth to the Parthians, the Babylonians, the furthest of the Arabs, the Jews beyond the Euphrates and the people of Adiabene' (*B.J.* I, 6). The truth which Josephus revealed was pragmatic—the power of Rome was invincible and therefore favoured by Heaven; rebellion was futile and even sinful.

IV. 'The Administrator'. The world was conquered by the Republic, pacified by the generals of Augustus and governed by the Empire. Agricola, like Poppaeus Sabinus 'par negotiis neque supra', was the civil servant of whom Augustus must have dreamed. His biography tells us more precious things than the record of campaigns in Britain; and Mr. Charlesworth develops with his customary skill and penetration the themes which the *Agricola* suggests. The survival of Tacitus' laudation and the scarcity of other evidence may magnify unduly the work of Agricola in peace and war. The important thing about Agricola is this—he was not unique. 'Agricola was one of the first who deliberately tried to promote civilization, to govern after conquest, and to educate as well as govern' (p. 128). Yes—but what of other provinces? or, if we forget for a moment the historian's testimonial to his father-in-law, what was the policy of that earlier governor of Britain of whom he spitefully says 'honestum pacis nomen segni otio imposuit' (*Ann.* XIII, 39)?

V. 'The Merchant'. We should not expect the author of *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* to neglect economics for administration. No single individual of the trading classes has left the materials for his biography, so the fifth figure is composite, derived from the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, from miscellaneous literary sources and from inscriptions. This is neat, amusing and instructive.

These lectures were delivered before an American audience. They retain in print the freshness of the spoken word and are a model of their kind.

RONALD SYME.

Trinity College, Oxford.